The Concert Band

This month's article is written by TSgt Jeffrey Snavely, a seven-year veteran of the Concert Band. Sergeant Snavely served as clarinetist and bass clarinetist, and his unique musical flexibility was showcased in a variety of ways. During his tenure he was featured as a soloist with the Concert Band, performing classical, jazz and Dixieland repertoire on soprano clarinet. In addition, he performed on bass clarinet in the Band's Duke Ellington Orchestra, rendering extensive jazz solos from the Ellington repertoire that culminated in a highly successful concert at the 1999 Midwest Clinic in Chicago, Illinois. A native of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Sergeant Snavely is a graduate of Indiana University where he received his bachelor's degree as well as the prestigious performer's certificate, which is only awarded to the top three percent of each graduating class. He is the son of Jack Snavely, well-known clarinet pedagogue, and in this article, you're treated to the unique perspective of a bandsman who grew up in the world of music. Sergeant Snavely rejoins the civilian sector this month, and his presence in the clarinet section will be sorely missed.

--MSgt Elizabeth Campeau

n this history-making election year, the phrase, "every four years," holds special meaning for the Concert Band. Like the presidential election, some of our major performances take place just once every four years. Perhaps most obvious is this year's Presidential Inaugural Parade, which draws performers from not only the Concert Band, but from nearly every unit in The USAF Band squadron, along with the premier bands of our sister services, the Army, Marine Corps, Navy and Coast Guard.

Other special annual events, unique to Washington, D.C., are supported on a rotating basis by the four resident premier military bands. They include the Pageant of Peace national Christmas tree and Menorah lighting at the Ellipse, and the Easter sunrise and Memorial Day services at Arlington National Cemetery's amphitheater. If you ever have the opportunity to attend one of these special events, you're in for a treat.

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An "every four-year" performance most anticipated by the Concert Band, though, is the trip to Chicago for the annual Midwest Clinic. Held in mid-December, this international convention is one of the largest musical events in the country, attracting over 12,000 participants each year. Attendees include music educators, professional performers (including military musicians) and music students of all ages. The convention hosts numerous concerts, instructional clinics and seemingly endless rows of display booths representing all facets of the music industry.

All of the premier military bands sponsor recruiting booths, establishing an important and visible presence at the convention. The USAF Band uses this opportunity to interact with music educators, offering them a chance to receive our latest recordings to share with their students. It is an extremely effective method for reaching one of the Band's dearest audiences: tomorrow's professionals. The Band also produces posters, which feature a photo of various performing units, along with useful musical information. These are found hanging in school band rooms across the country, inspiring new generations of musicians.

The Midwest Clinic holds special significance for this writer, as my father was a music educator. Every year during my youth he would disappear for a few days and return with bags full of product samples, CDs, new equipment and most importantly, candy samples! As I got older and more serious about music, I started to attend the convention with my dad. For us, highlights of the convention were clinics by major jazz performers, such as Wynton Marsalis and Eddie Daniels, and the concert featuring one of the Washington, D.C. premier military bands. This concert was always so popular that a special room was set up with a closed-circuit television broadcast for those who couldn't get a seat in the packed ballroom. To help meet this demand, the Air Force Band gave two incredibly successful one-hour concerts as the featured military band last month.

For many members of the Concert Band, playing at the Midwest Clinic is truly one of the musical highlights of our careers. This performance, for an audience of industry peers and students, inspired the Band to play at its highest level, creating a memorable (some say magical) concert for audience and performers.

-- TSgt Jeffrey T. Snavely

The Concert Band will fend off the winter blahs with two exciting convention performances in January and February. In January, we will join forces with the Singing Sergeants and perform at the convention of the Colorado Music Educators Association in Denver, and in February, the Concert Band travels to Denton, Texas, to perform for the College Band Directors National Association convention at the University of North Texas. The Concert Band will be an active participant in the 35th annual Guest Artist Series at DAR Constitution Hall. Join us as the series begins in February. Check the calendar for details. - -E.C.

Cadenza

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